



Congresswoman Stephanie Murphy  
Prepared Remarks  
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Transatlantic Partnership: Perspectives and Realities  
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Good morning.

Thank you Simon. And thank you to the Transatlantic Policy Network for organizing this event in general and this panel on the U.S.-Europe security relationship in particular.

To re-introduce myself, my name is Stephanie Murphy and I am a first-year member of Congress. I represent a district in central Florida that includes Orlando. I am a member of the House Armed Services Committee, where I serve on the Subcommittee on Readiness and the Subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities. Before coming to Congress, I worked in various roles as a civilian employee at the Department of Defense, where my primary region of focus was the Asia-Pacific.

I want to begin my short remarks with an even shorter story. This past weekend, my six-year-old son was visiting Washington, DC from Orlando with a number of his classmates and their parents. I escorted them to the World War II Memorial, which prompted one of my son's more pensive friends to turn and ask me: "Ms. Stephanie, how come there hasn't been a World War III?"

I gave what I believe to be a truthful—although perhaps not age-appropriate—response. I told him I thought there were two main reasons, or pillars, why we have not experienced direct and devastating conflict between major powers in the last 60 years. The first is U.S. leadership around the world. The second is the establishment of institutions and alliances by the United States and its European partners in the wake of World War II.

Rest assured: If this child grows up to be the Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, I intend to claim credit.

As I stand here today, I confess that I have some concern about the continued durability of these two pillars in the face of current threats, both internal and external.

With respect to the first pillar, U.S. global leadership, the threat is *internal*. I am opposed to any action or rhetoric emanating from U.S. officials that suggests the United States will retreat from the world stage and turn inward. Students of American history know that isolationism has been a recurring theme since our nation's founding.

I understand why calls to put "America first" can resonate with hard-working families throughout the United States who are struggling here at home and who sincerely wonder why our country is spending precious taxpayer dollars on defense, diplomacy, and development abroad.

At the same time, I firmly believe—and will make an impassioned case in any forum—that the United States is safer, stronger and more prosperous when our service members, our diplomats, our trade officials, and our aid workers are sufficiently numbered, adequately resourced and deeply engaged. The world is a better place when we work side-by-side with our partners in Europe and other regions, both to prevent conflict and to prepare ourselves to prevail should conflict occur.

What I want to emphasize is that I think you'll find significant bipartisan support in Congress for this principle—the principle that U.S. and global security flow from, and depend on, U.S. global leadership and engagement. My expectation is that, while the political process may be rather messy, you will ultimately see such support reflected in the various bills approved by Congress this year and in the coming years that set policy and budgets in the areas of defense, diplomacy and foreign aid.

In general, I am of the view that Congress, as a co-equal branch of government and the one with the primary power of the purse, should not be timid about exercising its considerable authority when it comes to domestic policy *or* foreign policy. We should use the power conferred upon us by Article I of the Constitution, and wield it in a way that is consistent with our longstanding national interests and values, ideally with the approval of the executive branch, but over its objections if necessary.

That brings me to the second pillar, namely the global and regional institutions and formal alliances created by the United States and Europe in the aftermath of World War II, which have helped preserve the peace for generations.

These institutions are designed to sustain and strengthen what is sometimes referred to as the "liberal democratic order"—a term that means different things to different people but certainly encompasses respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations and for the rule of law.

One of those institutions—the anchor of the transatlantic security relationship—is, of course, NATO, which has increased from 12 members in 1949 to 29 members today. The current commander of U.S. European Command has described NATO as "a united, capable, warfighting alliance resolved in its purpose and strengthened by shared values that have been forged in battle." The heart of the NATO alliance is Article V, which states that an armed attack on one member state shall be considered an attack on all member states. I am pleased that the Trump administration has reaffirmed, albeit belatedly, the U.S. commitment to Article V.

In Europe, the primary *external* threat to the rules-based international order that NATO seeks to uphold comes from Russia under President Vladimir Putin. It is an interesting wrinkle of history that NATO was created to confront the threat posed by the Soviet Union; that NATO evolved to take on other missions both within and outside of Europe once the USSR collapsed; and that NATO has returned to its roots as post-Soviet Russia has now, unfortunately, become more antagonistic.

Russia's pattern of military and political aggression in recent years is breathtaking. On the military side, for example, Russia invaded Georgia; illegally annexed the Ukrainian territory of Crimea; is waging a not-so-covert war in eastern Ukraine; signed and then violated two agreements designed to end the crisis in Ukraine; deployed a cruise missile in violation of the landmark INF treaty; and has been taking provocative actions against U.S. and NATO planes and ships.

On the political side, Russia has used cyber-attacks, disinformation, propaganda and other forms of so-called "hybrid warfare" or "active measures" to influence elections and undermine confidence in democratic institutions in the United States, France, and other European countries. Unfortunately, partisan politics in the United States is interfering with the effort to learn precisely what Russia did and how it can be prevented in the future. I was recently in Asia, and a top defense official from a partner country in the region said to me: "If the United States is unwilling to defend its own democracy, what assurances do we have that you will help us defend ours?" It is a powerful point, and one that is well taken.

The United States, working with our NATO allies and other European partners, must rise to the challenge posed by Russia. If we do not, the international order that our countries have struggled and sacrificed to shape and sustain for decades will be imperiled.

In my view, the National Defense Authorization Act that the U.S. House passed last week proves we are serious about addressing this challenge. For example:

- The bill authorizes continued defensive lethal assistance to Ukraine so it can better defend itself against Russian aggression.
- The bill also authorizes increased funding for the European Deterrence Initiative, which demonstrates our enduring commitment to the region, thereby reassuring allies and warning adversaries. EDI funding enables the United States to consistently rotate combat forces to Europe, to conduct more frequent trainings and joint military exercises, to pre-position equipment in the region, and to provide critical intelligence and weapons support.
- Finally, the bill authorizes funding to enable the United States to develop capabilities to respond to Russia's violation of the INF Treaty.

I think this bill reinforces a valuable lesson for international observers of the United States, which is that you should always watch what the United States *does*, rather than simply listen to what certain U.S. officials *say*. Because actions matter more than rhetoric.

I will leave it here. I look forward to the panel discussion. Thank you again for inviting me.